Narrative System
Social Bond, Domains & Attitude Choices

The Narrative Systems presented here are a direct evolution of what was done in Banishers: Ghosts of New Eden.

In Banishers, we had Attitude Choices in Staged Dialogues, as well as the Mourning Score System that reflected the player's choices during the Closures of the Haunting Cases to inform Red & Antea's fate.

The idea here is to build up from this experience and present a more rounded, communicative system with more explicit impact and choices by centering them around a main theme: CONNECTION.

INTRODUCTION

In order to bring more **flexibility** to the quest structure, **add role-playing elements** as well as player choice, incentive and replayability, we may consider these systems that will be tightly linked:

- *DOMAIN* - player will be presented with a choice between three facets of the Main Character and choose between three different aspects of the character's background and specialization domain. This will unlock **specific Dialogue Prompts & gameplay impacts** linked to the background chosen.

- *ATTITUDE CHOICE* - through Attitude Choices, the dialogue system allows the player to define their Playable Character's **personality** during key moments, and **roleplay** in a more personal and subtle way the character's major personality traits and attributes.

- *SOCIAL BOND* - according to the player's characteristic & personality traits, this narrative system in the form of a gauge will reflect the **TRUST**, **RESPECT** and **COMMITMENT of the major NPCs** in the game to the Playable Character.

These communicating systems will enable us to **branch out the dialogue** and present the player with different ways to solve situations and forge different types of relationships with the NPCs.

The Social Bond will also have a **strong impact on the Quest Design and the way Events & Outcomes unfold**, depending on player choice & their relationships.

It is important to note that our Main Character is a **defined character with her own background, past, relationships, etc.** The Background, Personality Trait & Social Bond system are a way to **clarify** the different Personality **ASPECTS** and **FACETS** of our Playable Character.

I. DOMAIN

The life of the Playable Character is a solitary and difficult one. As they roam the lands, they are faced with many different dire situations, pleas, and necessity to aid the surviving populations. Maturity and emotional stability are needed for them to have the capacity to harvest many survival skills, as well as people skills, and engineering capacities all on their own.

Thus, our Main Character is at the crossroads between **a Ranger (or Explorer), a Designer (or Engineer),** and **a Guardian (or Humanitarian).**

As the tie between the knowledge they gather, and the scattered and struggling Survivors, the Playable Character intertwines and bridges knowledge and people together through connection.

These **three Domains** will be considered in our Narrative as a **favoured facet** & **life path** chosen by our Playable Character in the face of **their work** and **their way to address their personal story**.

RANGER	DESIGNER	GUARDIAN
Facet: Archeologist, Pathfinder, Scientific Investigator	*Facet: Engineer, Artificer, Craftsman, Artisan, Custodian*	*Facet: Humanist, Warden, Protector, Philanthropic*
The Main Character became a **trailblazer**, preferring the rarely trodden wilderness and quiet of a solitary life, exploring ancient ruins and detecting relics from the past that could be of use, to **run away** from the chatter of their mind.	The Main Character became a visionary in pursuit of **innovation**, preferring the company of technology and machines in their need to understand the world around them, to **drown** the chatter of their mind.	The Main Character became an **altruist**, **intuitive and attuned** to the emotions of others, preferring to surround herself with people any chance possible, to **ignore** the chatter of her mind.
In the face of their personal loss and quest for reconnection, the Playable Character developed an **aptitude for self-sufficiency and ultra-independence**. Their quest for connection to find and bring people together took the form of **knowledge foraging** and the **pursuit of the past**.	In the face of their personal loss and need to understand the baffling world around them, the Playable Character developed a keen sensitivity in finding ways to improve **infrastructures and gear** through the foraged knowledge and technology of the past to **forge** a new path to **durable and accessible technology**.	In the face of their personal loss and need to make sense of their existence, the Playable Character became an excellent **mediator** dedicated to aiding anyone in need in matters great and small. Natural **"third-party" and guardian**, they work side by side with communities to heed and apply their wisdom, and protect the people with whatever means necessary.
Playstyle Weakspot damage Critical strike chance Speed Furtivity Ranged damage Damage overtime Burst damage	*Playstyle* Hacking Crowd Control Shield Energy Afflictions	*Playstyle* Melee damage Poise Damage reduction Health points Stagger Stamina

The Playable Character's **Domain** should not only be reflected through dialogue choices, but also be present throughout combat, mechanics & features, to create a relationship where both aspects influence one another. *Possible Gameplay impact may be:*

- Specific starter kit
- Specific Dialogue prompts showcasing a certain type of experience & knowledge acquired by the Playable Character over the years
- Specific Passive Skills and/or Perks linked to their specific playstyle

As it is important for a player starting a new game to understand who the main character. This **DOMAIN selection** will take a more **DIEGETIC** form in order to introduce key narrative elements such as who the Weavers are and introduce our protagonist.

GAME EXAMPLES

For a full list of different Diegetic Character Creation menus and staging: click [here](#)

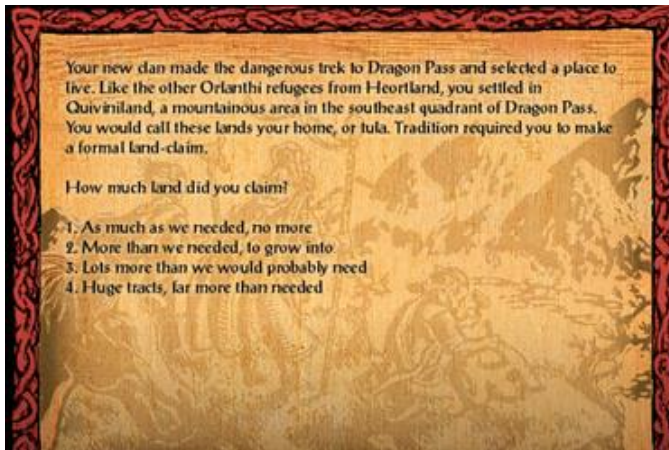|	
[Click here for Game Footage](#) 	In **Firewatch** *(Narrative Walking Simulator)*, player is presented with a prologue narrated in the second person singular & active imperative. Player switches between this written choice narrative and moments of short gameplay that serve as brief tutorials for navigation through out the world. This prologue enables to present the main character's past and the reason why he has made his way to the forest as a ranger. Player is presented with choices that impact the character's story (minimally) and will ripple through the radio moments with the other NPC of the game.
[Click here for Game Footage](#) 	**King of Dragon Pass** *(Turn base strategy)* starts with a dense questionnaire with introductory text & six main questions whose answers will : introduce the heavy lore of the world and its setting, and define the clan the player will assume control over. The player's choices will have a significant impact on how the rest of the game plays out as they define skills, statistics, boosts, opponents, etc.
[Click here for questionnaire](#) 	**The Elder Scrolls 3 : Morrowing** *(RPG)* presents a similar questionnaire taking the form of a personality test given to the player in game by a character. After Ten-multiple-choice questions, the character will suggest a class that best fits the answers The game offers 21 different classes; thus, each question has three possible answers, and each answer indicates a preference for one of the specialties: Stealth, Combat, or Magic.

According to the Playable Character's background and bio, the survey presented to the player may take the form of our protagonist in the middle of recording a Voice Note. Audio logs and written reports are part of their daily tasks. In this case, they will be sending a Voice Note to their mother who has recently passed away.

The dialogue prompts presented to the player - taking the form of choosing what the Playable Character is saying to their mother - will define a **FACET** of their personality to choose a **DOMAIN**.

II. ATTITUDE CHOICE

Personality Trait will be made explicit through **ATTITUDE CHOICES** in **STAGED DIALOGUES** and give the player the opportunity to express themselves and react to an NPC or a situation in a certain way.

Unlike the Domain, Personality trait will be **EMERGENT** instead of a pre-requisite for the player at the start of the game. This will enable the player to feel more empowered to make the playable character their own, and role play accordingly towards which path and outcome they prefer.

True character can only be expressed through **choice in dilemma**. How the Playable Character chooses to act under pressure reflects who they really are - the greater the pressure, the truer and deeper the choice in character.

These three Personality Traits mirror the **DOMAIN** in a way that they represent three facets of our protagonist's personality.

SPIRIT (SPI)	FOCUS (FOC)	AWARENESS (AWA)
Personality traits: Persuasive, Confident, Empowered, Intimidating, Quick-witted	*Personality traits: Analytical, Rational, Methodical, Curious, Inquisitive*	*Personality traits: Sensitive, Kind, Understanding, Insightful, Perceptive*
Over the year, the Playable Character has developed a great inner strength and sense of self. Their confidence materialises through oration and skills in the fine arts of empowerment. **Spirit** is a measure of how well the Playable Character knows themselves, how confident they are in how they show up to the world, and trust in their sharp repartee.	Over the years, the Playable Character has developed keen eyes and an inquisitive mind: they excel in their capacity for concentration and ability to recall knowledge. **Focus** is a measure of how well they approach their task or situations in an analytical, reasoned way; and how quick they associate different ideas and situations together.	Over the years, the Playable Character has developed an acute sense of the feelings and emotions of others around them. They excel through their skills of perception and compassion. **Awareness** is a measure of how well they process the world around them and their insight towards other living beings.

GAME EXAMPLE – Dragon Age

	*In the Dragon Age Game series, player may systematically choose between three prompt **reactions**: Diplomatic, Sarcastic, Aggressive. Each personality is defined by a specific icon and position in the dialogue wheel for a better read and comprehension.*
	Here, the **Spirit** / **Focus** / **Awareness** Choice Prompts may appear through Attitude Choices in **specific** moments when an impactful reaction from the player is needed.

Please note that these Attitude Choices **do not take the form of a gauge** and **will not be tracked in a systemic way**. They are a dialogue feature to explicit in a gameplay way the different values and personality traits of the NPCs, which will **directly impact the Social Bond System**.
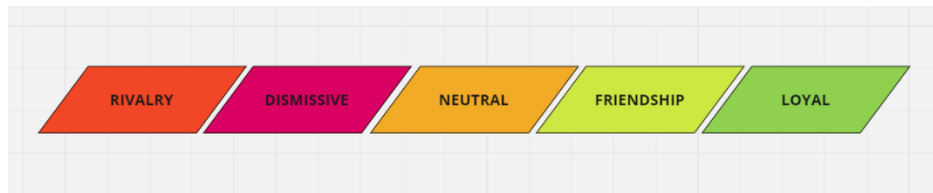

III. SOCIAL BOND

The Social Bond is at the center of the Narrative Experience. This system's main purpose is to **bring debt and complexity to the game's narrative and character relationships**. This system is key to **FORGING TIES** with the Community that the player is helping.

The Social Bond is based on the **concept of Friendship & Rivalry**, where each character's **belief system and paradigm is constantly being influenced by player's actions and choices**.

How the player handles certain situations, interactions or resolve conflict - fed by **Player Choice**, **Domain Prompts & Playstyle** & **Attitude Choices** - will directly impact the NPC's perception of them.

This relationship will take the form of an invisible **GAUGE** to explicit the bond between the Main Character and the Pillars of each community.

- **Character Growth**

It is important to note that the Social Bond goes beyond a simple binary "good or bad" metric. Each NPC has their own **unique set of values and morals**, and their **personal character growth depends on the relationship bond** with the Playable Character.

Friendship means agreeing with and supporting the follower in what *they* want to do, no matter how crazy, illogical or dangerous to self and/or others.

Rivalry means opposing their big cause, often for the right reasons.

Each pillar within a community has **distinct and different personalities and values**: actions that please some, may displease others.

The Social Bond will extend towards Friendship or Rivalry according to the player's dialogue choices, quest choices, and playstyle.

Example: NPC could value a **SPIRIT** *Playable Character, and will value* **action-oriented** *outcomes to Quests, and a more lethal playstyle reflected by the* **GUARDIAN PLAYSTYLE** *etc.*

It will be very possible to be a "better friend" to someone by choosing the rivalry path, since you're trying to stop them from giving in to their own self-destructive whims. It's not always the most intuitive, but friendship does not necessarily equal doing the "right" thing and rivalry as doing the "bad" thing. It's just as likely to be the other way around.

In most cases, players will experience having multiple opposing Pillars inside a community whose Social Bond choices conflict with one another. Balancing these conflicts can be tricky since decisions that please one companion but may upset another.

The Player will need to consider the consequences of their actions and make choices based on their own values or the long-term goals of their playthrough in regard to the Community's needs by using dialog options and actions that aim to find compromises, pacify tensions, or even resolve conflicts.

Frequently engaging in conversations with Pillars, asking about their opinions, thoughts, and experiences will help deepen the relationship and gain insights to their likes and dislikes.

Each character will have a different character growth (or lack thereof) depending on the Social Path the player is on.

- **INTIMATE MOMENTS**

Each Community's pillars will have their story, personality and past for the Playable Character to apprehend and understand. As the player journeys through each community, they will be able to share different "one on one" personal conversation with each pillar - which will branch out according to the NPC's Social Bond. These moments may serve as moments of reflection on the player's journey, their bond to the community and what they have achieved so far.

These moments may also serve as implicitly pushing a character towards a certain path of character development.

Community Pillars start at a certain threshold when they are encountered. As a pillar's bond evolves, their feeling towards the Playable Character also changes. As the relationship changes, their dialogue changes to reflect these new states.

Friendship or Rivalry relationships with the pillars will have significant effects such as unlocking **new gameplay & Narrative moments**

Example: new dialogues, new quests, new paths inside quests and/or quest outcomes, attribute bonuses for the player's skill tree depending on the pillar's specialities, items, or the possibility of a strong bond of Friendship - Respect / Rivalry - or Strife translated through Intimates Moments.

- **METRICS**

NPCs may not always start at **NEUTRAL** and can start anywhere on the gauge. Some may even never reach one extreme or the other and may simply reach a neutral state. This will enable us to control the branching and define the NPCs personality more authentically.

Example: Pillar from Community #1 will start in a Dismissive state and may change bond levels according to player choice.

The Pillar's BOND gauge can be maxed out with 100 points in each direction *(Metric exact still TBD)*.

Greatly Validated / Greatly Scorned	Validated / Scorned	Slightly Validated / Scorned
+/- 20 pts	+/- 5 pts	+/- 1 pts
Player Choice	**Domain**	**Attitude Choices**
The Bond Feedback may be EXPLICIT: *<NPC> feels seen / challenged* *<NPC> feels validated / scorned* *<NPC> approves / disapproves*		

Each Community that the Playable Character comes across will have one MAJOR PROBLEMATIC. The different Pillars will often have conflicting or opposing ways to handle them.

- **QUEST BRANCHING**

By impacting the Quest Branching, this will enable us to add more granularity and branching through player choice.

- MINOR Player Choices (Side Quests) & PLAYSTYLE may inform the NPC's SOCIAL BOND LEVELS

- SOCIAL BOND LEVELS may create INCITING INCIDENTS, NPC CRISIS POINTS and/or REVERSALS by NPCs or the World that players will then have to deal with

- The Bond forged with each relationship, and the path of character development that has stemmed from these bonds, will play a role in the OUTCOME of Each Community, and the Major Project chosen by the Community.

True choice is dilemma.

These different systems will create **communicating Chains of Reactions between the systems, the world and the characters**. Progression, escalation, and antagonism will be felt in the narrative through dilemma, true player choice & consequences.

How a character chooses in a true dilemma is a powerful expression of their humanity and of the world in which they live in.